

**DRAFT**

Rev 12 – 04/05/11



**City of Austin  
Federal Legislative Program  
112<sup>th</sup> Congress – 1<sup>st</sup> Session**

# DRAFT

Rev 12 – 04/05/11

## Table of Contents

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General Statement of City Legislative Focus .....	1
Priority City of Austin Projects .....	2
Surface Transportation.....	3
Highway/Transit Reauthorization	
Intercity Passenger Rail	
Priority Project – Urban Rail Transit Project	
Priority Project – MoPac Bicycle Bridge	
Priority Project – I-35 Freight Corridor Study	
Priority Project – Waller Creek Multi-Use Trail	
Aviation .....	7
General Reauthorization Principles	
Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport	
Full Funding of Core Local Government Programs .....	8
CDBG, HOME, Law Enforcement & Homeland Security	
Energy Efficiency & Conservation Block Grant	
Urban Area Security Initiative	
Water and Wastewater Infrastructure	
Housing & Community Development .....	10
Priority Project – Plaza Saltillo HUD BEDI / 108 Grant Program	
Priority Project – Austin Family Business Loan Program	
Telecommunications .....	12
General Principles	
Onion Creek.....	13
Project Overview	
WRDA 2011 Reimbursement Language	
Priority Project – FY 2012 Construction Funding	
Title XVI Water Reclamation .....	14
Health Care.....	15
General Principles	
Public Safety .....	16
General Policy Statement	
Public Safety Communications	
Priority Project – Police Technology	

# DRAFT

Rev 12 – 04/05/11

## **General Statement of City Legislative Focus**

The City of Austin's Federal Legislative Program focuses on policies and legislation that directly and positively impact the City of Austin. The City of Austin opposes any legislative or regulatory action that:

- Erodes the home rule authority of municipalities,
- Constrains the ability of the City of Austin to allocate resources to areas of locally determined concern, or
- Preempts City of Austin authority in matters generally and traditionally the domain of local government.

In particular, the City of Austin supports policies and legislation that:

- Provide an equitable distribution of federal funds,
- Address the concerns and needs of large metropolitan center cities in the areas of transportation, public safety, affordable housing, vibrant and healthy neighborhoods, energy and the environment,
- Recognize the important role of strong central cities in our nation's economy and as innovators in broad areas of public policy,
- Provide a solid safety net for economically vulnerable populations and
- Recognize the challenge of climate change and the need to develop economically sustainable ways to address it.

# **DRAFT**

**Rev 12 – 04/05/11**

## **Priority City of Austin Projects**

The City of Austin has identified several community priorities that are emphasized throughout the Legislative Program under the various subject headings. The City of Austin greatly appreciates all assistance provided in previous budget years and requests consideration for the completion of these priority projects from available funding sources in the future. All relevant materials and cost analysis related to these projects are current and available upon request. The City's staff welcomes all opportunities, via the federal appropriations process, grants and the advisement of the congressional delegation, to pursue applicable funding sources.

# DRAFT

Rev 12 – 04/05/11

## Surface Transportation

### Highway/Transit Reauthorization

The City of Austin calls on Congress to craft a successor to SAFETEA-LU (PL 109-59) that recognizes the key role metropolitan areas and their center cities play in our nation's economy. Funding allocation, project selection and program structure should reflect the fact that the vast majority of our nation's economic output comes from metropolitan areas and that the vast majority of our nation's population lives in metropolitan areas.

Specifically, the City of Austin supports a SAFETEA-LU successor that:

- Provides for an equitable distribution of highway and transit funds;
- Maintains a guaranteed funding mechanism that ensures that all Highway Trust Fund revenues are spent on highway and transit programs;
- Directly addresses metropolitan area and central city surface transportation needs, with a strong focus on metropolitan mobility;
- Supports robust funding for the New Starts Program;
- Maintains a strong metropolitan planning process to ensure that local elected officials have the tools they need to support sustainable economic development and meet local needs;
- Links surface transportation to environmental concerns such as clean air, clean water and climate change;
- Channels funding directly to metropolitan areas, at a minimum maintaining the suballocation of Surface Transportation Program funds to metropolitan areas;
- Builds on the past decade's investment in transit by providing significantly increased resources for transit, including increased funding to meet the growing nationwide demand for rail transit;
- Expands the Transportation Enhancements and Safe Routes to School Programs;
- Does not increase the local share, currently 20%, for federally-assisted highway and transit projects, and
- Further empowers local elected officials by requiring full state disclosure of how federal surface transportation funds are spent.

### Intercity Passenger Rail

The City of Austin also supports increased federal investment in intercity and regional passenger rail. An important part of a balanced transportation system, intercity and regional passenger rail reduces highway and airport congestion, reduces energy consumption, helps cities improve air quality and, because most trips are downtown to downtown, promotes central city economic development. In particular, the City of Austin supports efforts to make the South Central High-Speed Rail Corridor a reality and to implement Lone Star Rail District regional passenger rail service between Georgetown and San Antonio.

### Priority Project – Urban Rail Transit Project

The City of Austin seeks authorization of its Urban Rail Project under the New Starts Program and also seeks language allowing money the City spends on Phase I of the Project to be used as the "super match" for future, federally-funded phases of the Project. In FY 2012, the City is seeking \$1

# DRAFT

Rev 12 – 04/05/11

million for the project under the FTA-Alternatives Analysis Program. The City of Austin is currently completing environmental fatal flaw analyses for what might be a first investment phase of a larger Urban Rail system (a blend of streetcar/light rail type services). The Urban Rail system will serve the Mueller Neighborhood, University of Texas, Capitol Complex, Downtown, Riverside Corridor, and ABIA. It will provide circulator services in central Austin and commuter-type services for close-in neighborhoods near central Austin.

City Council will make a determination of a locally preferred alternative as part of an updated Alternatives Analysis (AA). The AA was begun by Capital Metro and taken over by the City of Austin to update, extend and expand to meet the needs of the City as the implementing agency. The intent is to complete an environmental process under NEPA on the entire Urban Rail System. At this point the City of Austin is proposing to ask voters in November, 2012, to fund an initial operable segment (initial investment segment) using local funds. The City will pursue federal funding through FTA for the subsequent extensions of the initial investment segment once the NEPA process is complete. It is likely that the first investment segment will be delivered using innovative delivery methods (design-build or design-build-maintain-operate). NEPA would parallel the more extensive design process envisioned with these delivery methods. Austin would like to use the local cost of the initial investment segment as overmatch for the federal funding requests. The City anticipates that 20 percent or more of the subsequent extensions would still be funded locally and that we would be seeking the use of previous local investments as overmatch only.



In October, 2010 the Capital Area Council of Governments of Austin was awarded \$3,700,000 under the HUD/DOT Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant program. The program's vision will form the basis for the CAMPO 2035 Long-Range Transportation Plan, which envisions future regional growth being accommodated in a network of 37 mixed-use, mixed-income, walkable, connected and transit-supportive Activity Centers that provide a balanced mix of jobs, housing, and services, primarily within the context of existing communities. The Activity Centers concept is designed to improve the region's livability outcomes in such areas as transportation system performance, air and water quality, and social equity and opportunity.

## **Priority Project – MoPac Bicycle Bridge**

In 2009, the City of Austin initiated its Austin Strategic Mobility Plan (ASMP), a comprehensive and responsive community-driven approach to the major transportation challenges facing the city and Central Texas. The City's goal is to promote smart, strategic mobility investments and leverage resources to create sustainable transportation systems that reflect the shared values of the community. The ASMP envisions a multi-modal transportation grid offering different ways for Austinites to get around their city. As part of Phase I and development of the 2010 Mobility Bond program, over an 8-month period, the ASMP team used input from the community and from the

# DRAFT

## Rev 12 – 04/05/11

City and its partner agencies to identify gaps, needs, and issues facing the existing transportation network. The MoPac Pedestrian and Bicycle Bridge over Barton Creek received a very high score and ranked 23rd out of the nearly 3,000 identified projects. Because the project design is funded locally, and full design will last through calendar year 2012, with construction in 2013, this project was not presented for funding in the 2010 Mobility Bond (which focused on projects that could be initiated or complete within two years). Future funding sources could be future municipal bonds or federal/state grants. There is also considerable private industry interest in the project, with \$30,000 already committed for project construction by area business. The project is currently planned for three phases, with a total cost of approximate six (6) million dollars. Phase 1 is estimated at approximately 1.5 million, phase 2 is approximately 3.6 million, and phase 3 approximately \$650,000.

This project is critical to the provision of a safe, separate crossing for bicycles and pedestrians over the environmentally sensitive Barton Creek, and off of the MOPAC Expressway. The bridge also will provide a critical link in the bicycle route system connecting Downtown to Southwest Austin and serve as a critical connection for the large scale Violet Crown Trail System (formally Walk For a Day Trail). The City of Austin has committed to finding the most environmentally sensitive alignment and construction methods, and is currently working very closely with local environmental groups to assure that they are a partner in the development of the project.

### **Priority Project – I-35 Freight Corridor Study**

The City of Austin seeks support for a high-tech security system to meet needs of cargo traffic on the NAFTA Corridor (Interstate 35 and State Highway 130) in order to create jobs, grow exports, increase revenues and profits while ensuring better security and driver safety. The recent interception of explosives in U.S.-bound air cargo and the imminent accord on Mexico trucks entering the U.S. allowed in NAFTA underscores the need to improve screening of international goods arriving in Texas by land. The extraordinary volume of truck traffic on I-35 and the escalation of drug-related violence in Mexico increase the risk of security breaches along the NAFTA Corridor in Texas. Heavy trucks also impact traffic flow, being slow to accelerate and stop, and drivers' safety. Travis County's portion of I-35 has double the statewide average of fatalities, the highest in Texas; of those fatal accidents, 25 percent involved a truck. Disruptions in I-35 traffic impact consumers and businesses not only Texas but throughout the U.S. since 80 percent of Mexico's trade with the U.S. and Canada passes through Texas. Of that, 75 percent moves by truck on I-35 past San Antonio through Austin. In 2010, USDOT ranked Texas first with \$183 billion -- 19.9 percent -- of the total U.S. trade with NAFTA partners. Texas' 2010 figures are almost as much as the second (Michigan) and third (California) ranked states combined with \$189.5 billion, 20.6 percent of the total U.S. trade. Implementing a high-tech system to monitor I-35 cargo will generate thousands of jobs in security, logistics, trade and related fields and thus yield new revenues for Federal, state and local governments. Security while cargo is in transit ensures a more stable business climate and the resulting reductions in shipment delays and theft yields higher productivity and direct savings to businesses.

### **Priority Project – Waller Creek Multi-Use Trail**

The City of Austin has invested approximately \$144 million in a flood control tunnel that will curtail damaging floods and dramatically reduce the floodplain of Waller Creek. This investment allows land- owners adjacent to and nearby Waller Creek the ability to safely and securely develop their

# DRAFT

Rev 12 – 04/05/11

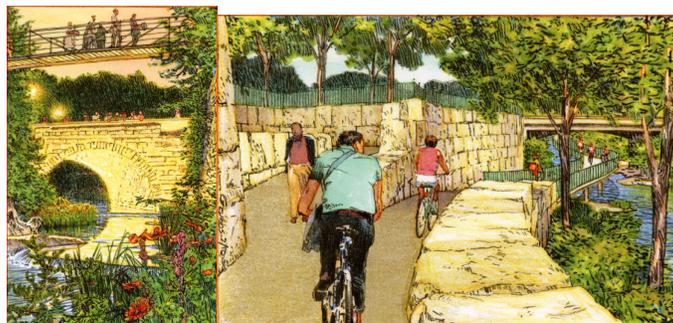
property, and affords the City the ability to safely invest in infrastructure to support this development and the wellbeing of Downtown Austin. The opportunity for redevelopment and associated infrastructure improvements will serve as the major impetus of our lifetime for the positive transformation of the eastern portion of Downtown Austin. The rehabilitation of the existing Waller Creek Multi-Use Trail is one of the infrastructure improvements approved by the Austin City Council in June 2010, as part of the Waller Creek District Master Plan.



Mobility improvements for all modes are at the heart of the Master Plan. The Plan recommends the creation of an approximately one mile long continuous bicycle/pedestrian trail along Waller Creek from Waterloo Park (the largest park in Downtown Austin) to Lady Bird Lake (the jewel of Austin's park system). This multi-use trail will provide improved mobility for pedestrians and bicyclists, connecting key destinations – Lady Bird Lake, the Convention Center, East 6<sup>th</sup> Street, rail and bus transit, Downtown, and the University of Texas (just to the north of Waterloo Park). These improvements and the connections they provide will enable residents and visitors to Downtown Austin to make more sustainable transportation choices.

The trail system will not only serve a mobility purpose. Located alongside a vastly improved urban creek, the trail system and accompanying improvements will become a major destination for the City and the region, connecting residents and visitors to a wonderful urban open space and serving as a catalyst for positive redevelopment.

The Waller Creek Trail is identified as Bicycle Route 951 in the City's adopted Bicycle Master Plan, and is an important component of the City's bicycle transportation network.



# DRAFT

Rev 12 – 04/05/11

## Aviation

### General Reauthorization Principles

The City of Austin invested considerable resources into Bergstrom International Airport. The City supports a federal aviation program that helps the City build on this investment and cements Bergstrom International Airport's role as a key building block of Austin's economy. Specifically, the City of Austin supports a reauthorization of federal aviation programs that:

- Maintains a guaranteed funding mechanism for the Airports & Airways Trust Fund,
- Maximizes funding for and the flexibility of the Airport Improvement Program,
- Maximizes flexibility in the use of Passenger Facility Charge revenue, and
- Provides local government and airport authorities with the resources they need to provide a safe and efficient aviation system.

The City of Austin also urges Congress to recognize the importance of intermodal connections and to make it as easy as possible for local governments to construct transit and intermodal passenger facilities linking airports with the central cities and regional employment centers that they serve.

### Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport

The City of Austin supports amending 49 USC 41718(a) to add "beyond-perimeter" slots at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport (DCA) to allow for additional flights to and from "beyond-perimeter" cities, including Austin. Airline travel between Austin Bergstrom International Airport (AUS) and DCA requires time-consuming connections that often make the trip between Austin and Washington a day-long journey that delays and missed connections often exacerbate. The City of Austin's considerable investment in AUS has provided important economic development dividends and opened up new travel opportunities for Austin residents and visitors. AUS now offers direct flights to numerous destinations through the United States, Canada and Mexico. This growth at AUS offers clear proof of travel demand and reinforces the travel and economic development restrictions created by the lack of a direct link between a state capital of 800,000 residents and the premier airport serving our nation's capital.

# DRAFT

Rev 12 – 04/05/11

## **Full Funding of Core Local Government Programs**

### **CDBG, HOME, Law Enforcement & Homeland Security**

The City of Austin calls on Congress to fully fund core local government programs, including, but not limited to:

- Community Development Block Grants (CDBG),
- HOME (a Federal program designed to create affordable housing),
- Local law enforcement assistance (such as COPS, Byrne and Juvenile Justice) and
- Homeland Security grants (such as the Urban Area Security Initiative, firefighter assistance and Metropolitan Medical Response Systems).

These programs help the City of Austin meet critical needs, promote community revitalization and protect public safety. The City of Austin was particularly concerned about the steep decline in funding for CDBG (-19%) and local law enforcement assistance (-67%) between FY 2001 and FY 2009 and appreciates the reversal of these cuts in FY 2010, however the House FY 2011 funding bill is seeking to cut funding for CDBG by \$2.49 billion and the HOME Program by \$175 million. Previous cuts to these programs impacted the City's community development and public safety efforts and further reductions would again severely impact those efforts.

### **Energy Efficiency & Conservation Block Grant (EECBG)**

As a national leader and key innovator in the areas of energy conservation and renewable energy, the City of Austin also urges Congress to fully fund (\$2 billion a year through FY 2012) the Energy Efficiency & Conservation Block Grant authorized by the Energy Independence & Energy Security Act of 2007 (PL 110-140). This new program will provide valuable assistance to the City of Austin's efforts in these areas.

### **Urban Area Security Initiative**

The City of Austin appreciates the delegation's assistance in securing UASI designation for the Austin Metropolitan Area. This designation has provided the City and its first responders with valuable assistance in the form of equipment and training. It has also led to the creation of the Austin Regional Intelligence Center (ARIC), which will increase cooperation between federal, state and local public safety officials. The City requests continued UASI designation and full funding of the UASI Program.

### **Water and Wastewater Infrastructure**

Water and wastewater utility providers are mandated to meet stringent federal and state environmental requirements in order to provide safe drinking water and wastewater services to the public. The City must repair, replace and rehabilitate aging and failing pipes and plants and build new infrastructure to comply with the increasingly complex regulations, protect public health, safeguard the environment and upgrade aging infrastructure.

The City of Austin identified an estimated \$4 billion of water and wastewater infrastructure needs as it developed its capital improvement program (CIP) for FY 2011 through FY 2015 and in subsequent planning. Austin utilizes a rigorous asset management system to prioritize infrastructure replacement. As part of this continual assessment, we also consider the addition of

# **DRAFT**

**Rev 12 – 04/05/11**

new customers and changes to governmental regulations regarding drinking water and wastewater disposal. Although \$4 billion in needs have been identified, due to financial constraints, the City plans to spend only \$1.27 billion for new infrastructure and upgrades over the next five years to address the highest priorities. Water and wastewater CIP planning for FY 2012 through FY 2016 is still underway.

The City of Austin supports legislation that provides grants for high priority water and wastewater infrastructure projects, particularly those that are designed to meet federal mandates. Increased funding to local water and wastewater utilities for the improvement and maintenance of water and wastewater infrastructure and additional water supplies is of paramount importance to the Austin and national economies. The City specifically supports legislation that sustains and increases funding for, and increases the flexibility of, the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) and Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF). Increased federal assistance will help the City of Austin to continue to meet federal and state clean water and drinking water requirements and provide sufficient water supplies to meet the current and future needs of its customers.

# DRAFT

Rev 12 – 04/05/11

## Housing & Community Development

### Housing & Community/Economic Development

The City of Austin is committed to making the City and its neighborhoods a better place to live, work and play. A major focus of these efforts is to create and maintain strong neighborhoods and to provide safe, decent, affordable housing, a suitable living environment and economic opportunities, specifically for low- and moderate-income individuals and communities.

To these ends, the City of Austin Neighborhood Housing and Community Development Office (NHCD) administers Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA), Home Investment Partnership Program (HOME), Section 108 Guarantee Loan and Economic Development Initiative (EDI) funds. These funds come from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and primarily benefit the low- and moderate-income population and neighborhoods in the City.

The City of Austin allocates federal funding for housing and community development activities in seven priority areas. The categories included in the NHCD Investment Plan are:

- (1) Homeless/Special Needs
- (2) Renter Assistance
- (3) Homebuyer Assistance
- (4) Homeowner Assistance
- (5) Housing Developer Assistance
- (6) Commercial Revitalization
- (7) Small Business Assistance

The City has a strong history of leveraging this federal funding with private dollars. Austin's vibrant and healthy neighborhoods are a testament to the strength and success of these efforts. The City of Austin supports federal policies that bolster the City's affordable housing, permanent supportive housing, housing rehabilitation, community development and economic development efforts, including but not limited to full funding of the programs listed above.

The creative industry in Austin, Texas relies heavily on the dollars produced through the Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) statute, providing arts and cultural marketing, tourism and the enhancement of visitor experience directly contributing to the cultural tourism industry of Austin's economy. Cultural Funding from HOT contracts over two-hundred arts and cultural organizations such as Austin Symphony, Ballet Austin, Long Center, Austin Lyric Opera, Austin Children's Museum, Austin Symphony and Film Society of Austin, as well as smaller arts organizations and individual artists.

In 2010, the Cultural Arts Division reported that over 332,000 artists participate in contract-related products and services with budgetary expenses totaling over \$52 million, and reached almost 3.7 million tourists. Non-profit arts organizations are major employers and contribute to Austin's cultural and economic vitality. In 2010, contracted non-profit organizations employed 410 full time employees and 833 part-time employees. The appropriation of Hotel tax allocation to arts and culture is directly related job creation in the creative industry and the attraction of the creative class

# DRAFT

Rev 12 – 04/05/11

for a larger corporate and business tax base. They are a major employer and contribute to Austin's cultural and economic vitality.

According to Americans for the Arts most recent national study, the nonprofit arts and culture represents a \$271.69 million industry in the City of Austin - one that supports 8,625 full-time equivalent jobs and generates \$27.49 million in local and state government revenue. The City of Austin's creative sector employs over 44,000 people, generates an estimated \$2.2 billion in economic activity and \$6 million in local tax revenues. The arts mean business in the City of Austin.

## **Priority Project – Plaza Saltillo HUD BEDI / 108 Grant Program**

The purpose of the BEDI program is to create jobs and to spur the return of Brownfields (abandoned or underused industrial or commercial properties available for re-use, of which may be complicated by the presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant) to productive economic use through financial assistance and enhance the security or improve the viability of the project financed with Section 108 guaranteed loan authority. The program will benefit low and moderate-income persons through near-term creation or retention of businesses and jobs. Additionally, this funding will aid private sector investment in the district resulting in increases in the local tax base. It is also intended to be a catalyst for future development in the district.

## **Priority Project – Austin Family Business Loan Program**

The City of Austin Family Business Loan Program (FBLP) will address the gap between small business loan demand and market supply with funds from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Section 108 of HUD's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program includes loan guarantee provisions. Austin's FBLP will lend Section 108 funds locally to established, credit-worthy small businesses that seek loans to invest in fixed assets and, optionally, to supplement working capital. FBLP loans are expected to impact the local economy in several ways. Increased access to capital will sustain and grow small businesses across Austin. Small business expansion will increase the quality and variety of goods and services available to local residents.

The third distinct impact of the FBLP is that as small businesses expand, they will create jobs. The Small Business Development Program estimates that the FBLP could create 770 jobs per year when it collaborates with other lenders to approve \$50 M in loans per year.<sup>1</sup>

Ultimately, the FBLP will spur employment opportunities for low-skilled and chronically unemployed populations. In the first place, a significant proportion of jobs created are likely to be service-oriented and naturally employ these demographics. Additionally, however, the FBLP will offer rate incentives to hire these disadvantaged populations.

CDBG Section 108 funds are critical to establishing FBLP. Section 108 will provide the seed money to establish 1) a loan loss reserve fund and 2) the pool of loanable funds from which the FBLP can go on to become self-sustaining. Reduced availability of Section 108 funds would limit the size of the FBLP loan portfolio and potentially affect the ability of FBLP to launch.

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<sup>1</sup> This figure assumes the creation of one new job per \$65,000 loaned to Austin small businesses.

# DRAFT

Rev 12 – 04/05/11

## Telecommunications

### General Principles

The City of Austin recognizes that genuine competition in telecommunications can yield more programming and applications, improved customer service, affordable rates for all and technology deployment. To be effective, an orderly transition to a truly competitive communications marketplace must respond to the interests of local government:

- **Local Authority** – The City supports preserving state and local authority. The City is best positioned to determine how to protect its citizens with regard to maintenance of infrastructure, public safety, consumer protections, and management of rights-of-way;
- **Rights-of-Way** – The City opposes federal intervention in its ability to manage and control the public rights-of-way and to collect compensation for their use and management in an equitable and nondiscriminatory manner. The public entrusts local governments with ensuring that use of public rights-of-way by communications providers does not interfere with public safety, unnecessarily disrupt commerce, impede general transportation uses, or otherwise impose costs on the local government or its taxpayers;
- **Fees, Revenues and Taxes** – The City opposes any federal preemption of its ability to collect revenue from telecommunications providers doing business in the City, particularly when that revenue is collected as reasonable compensation for the private, profit-making use of public rights-of-way owned and maintained by the City. Public rights-of-way represent property of tremendous economic value and paid for by local taxpayers, and the public has a right to expect that appropriate value is received for the use of its property held and managed by the government as a public trust. The City opposes any moratorium on state and local imposition of cell taxes and fees.
- **Local Zoning Authority** - The City of Austin opposes any legislative or regulatory effort to undermine local zoning and land use authority;
- **Public, Educational and Government (PEG) Channels** – PEG access channels play a vital role in a vibrant and democratic community and the City supports federal legislation to preserve and fund PEG channels to ensure that they are available to the entire community.

# DRAFT

Rev 12 – 04/05/11

## Onion Creek

The City of Austin appreciates authorization of this critical flood control and environmental restoration project as part of the Water Resources Development Act of 2007 (PL 110-114) and respectfully requests new start construction funding in the coming years consistent with the Army Corps of Engineers stated capability for the project.

### Project Overview

A joint project of the Army Corps of Engineers (ACE), the City of Austin, Travis County and LCRA, the Onion Creek Flood Control and Ecosystem Restoration Project will provide flood protection to the Onion Creek watershed and will restore its stream channel and adjacent riparian habitats. Floods in this watershed affected over 100 houses in 1998 and over 400 houses in 2001 and did considerable damage to the watershed's riparian areas. In the Onion Creek watershed near the intersection of South Pleasant Valley Road and East William Cannon Drive, there are over 700 houses subject to inundation in the 100-year floodplain. For the 100-year flood, house interior inundation depth ranges up to 10 feet in the Onion Creek study area.

This non-structural flood control project calls for the buyout and relocation of 483 single-family properties within the City of Austin, restoration of the Onion Creek floodplain to its natural state and construction of recreational amenities. Through 2010, the City has proactively purchased 283 properties and relocated the families living there from harm's way with a combination of funds, namely City drainage fees, 2006 City bonds, and a 2006 FEMA grant. In October 2009, the ACE drafted a Limited Reevaluation Report that updated the project costs with 2009 dollars and deleted costs paid for by the FEMA grant and associated City matching funds. The total updated cost for the project implementation within the City will be approximately \$65 million, with the City providing a local sponsor match of 35 percent of about \$23 million. ***As a result of a local bond referendum in 2006, the City of Austin has local match funding in hand.***

### WRDA 2011 – Reimbursement Language

The City of Austin requests language in the next authorization of WRDA that would allow for federal reimbursement of City of Austin expenditures on this project that exceed the City's cost share toward the total cost of the project. The City has proactively purchased 283 properties and relocated the families from harm's way and would like to continue to do so in the coming years. At the end of FY 2010 the City met its cost share towards the buyouts. Language authorizing reimbursement of City spending above the local sponsor match will allow the City to proceed with this project without forfeiting federal assistance. It is critical that the City proceed with planned buyouts. In addition to living in fear of the next flash flood, the families living in the project area find themselves in limbo, unable to sell or rent their property while they await buyout.

### Priority Project – FY 2012 Construction Funding

The City of Austin appreciates authorization of this critical flood control and environmental restoration project as part of the Water Resources Development Act of 2007 (PL 110-114) and respectfully requests \$5 million in new start General Construction funding in FY 2012 under the heading of "*Lower Colorado River Basin, Texas (Onion/Wharton)*" as requested in the President's FY2012 budget request. This funding is critical to ensuring that the project proceeds in a timely manner.

# DRAFT

Rev 12 – 04/05/11

## Title XVI Water Reclamation

Using an FY 2003 appropriation of \$275,000 and in-kind services from AWU staff, the City of Austin and the Bureau of Reclamation finalized, with a favorable recommendation, a required Feasibility Study for the City's participation in the Title XVI Water Reclamation Program. The City appreciates the delegation's support of that appropriation and for this project in general.



**51st Street Tower**

The City has identified industrial, commercial, institutional and recreational customers interested in using reclaimed water from the City's Walnut Creek and South Austin Regional Wastewater Treatment Plants for non-drinking water purposes. The City of Austin Water Reclamation Project will make highly-treated wastewater available to these through the construction of 137 miles of transmission pipes, 5 pump stations, and 7 storage tanks. Construction is complete on the 51<sup>st</sup> Street Elevated Tower and a major transmission main to the University of Texas area. The tower also provides reclaimed service to the Mueller redevelopment area (formerly Austin's major airport). The first customer on this main connected in March 2011. Currently under construction is a transmission main to supply the Austin-Bergstrom International Airport, along with other potential users located near the main. In the

design stage is the BAE Systems main and a main to the Montopolis area.

In general, the City of Austin supports all federal efforts to support local government water reclamation efforts. The City specifically requests authorization and funding of the City of Austin Water Reclamation Project under the Bureau of Reclamation Title XVI Program or another appropriate federal program.

# DRAFT

Rev 12 – 04/05/11

## Health Care

### General Principles

The public health infrastructure is responsible for protecting people's health and safety, providing credible information for better health decisions, and promoting good health through a network of partnerships. The City of Austin Health and Human Services Department provides preventative health services for the public in order to optimize their health and well being. These services include WIC clinics, STD testing and information programs including other communicable diseases, disease prevention such as immunizations, environmental health issues, community programs, and information such as birth and death records, restaurant permitting and sanitation scoring, and pandemic flu information.

The City of Austin encourages Congress to maintain support for the Health Care Reform Act. Several provisions within the act provide funding that assists the city in reaching its public health goals and allows our partners Central Health (Travis County Health Care District) to provide funding to ensure health care coverage for all populations. Additionally, the city encourages continued adequate funding for CDC, HRSA and CDBG/CSBG grants that support the operations of our public health operations and neighborhood centers. Failure to do so or significant decreases in funding will result in reductions to the current level of public health operations.

Chronic disease is the leading cause of death in Austin/Travis County. Chronic diseases include heart disease, cancer, stroke, diabetes, and hypertension. The City of Austin Health and Human Services Department implements population based services to prevent and control chronic disease. The primary focus is to address 3 key risk factors: tobacco use, physical activity and nutrition. Programs work with local coalitions, businesses, schools, and community partners to implement community changes to improve healthier lifestyles. Specific focus on areas where significant health inequities exist is a primary goal for the Health and Human Services Department.

In the last 100 years, public health has increased life expectancy by 30 years through vaccinations, control of infectious disease, fluoridated drinking water and many other activities. Today, this infrastructure needs the capacity to respond quickly to public health threats. Whether it is the spread of the West Nile virus into new areas of the United States, an outbreak of E.coli, or a bioterrorism attack involving anthrax at an airport, the public health system must keep pace with increasing demands. Budget cuts, lack of training, outmoded information systems and laboratories have created greater challenges in protecting the public's health against threats and emergencies.

Currently the City of Austin manages these critical functions with \$ 21.8M in federal dollars, \$ 2.1M in state dollars and \$ 37.3M in city dollars. Any reduction in federal dollars for these programs will significantly impact public health and health care efforts in the City of Austin.

# DRAFT

Rev 12 – 04/05/11

## Public Safety

### General Policy Statement

Ensuring the safety of Austin citizens and visitors is a paramount City priority that depends on a strong federal-state-local partnership. Federal financial assistance, information sharing and other forms of cooperation are crucial to the City of Austin's public safety efforts.

In general, the City calls on Congress and the Administration to fully fund core local law enforcement and Homeland Security programs including but not limited to COPS, Byrne Justice Assistance Grants, the State Homeland Security Grant Program, Metropolitan Medical Response Systems and Firefighter Assistance Grants.

### Public Safety Communications

In general, the City calls on Congress and the Administration to pursue policies that provide local public safety agencies with the tools they need to construct and operate a fully interoperable public safety communications system. Specifically, the City supports legislation to set aside the 10-megahertz portion of the wireless communications spectrum commonly known as the D-Block for public safety communications. Reserving the D-Block for public safety communications will allow creation of a nationwide interoperable public safety communications system and will ensure that first responders have the communications tools they need to effectively protect public safety and respond to emergencies.

### Priority Project – Police Technology

The City of Austin has made significant investments in public safety technology. The Austin Police Department is in the process of replacing its current in-car camera system with digital mobile audio and video. The digital mobile camera system will ensure that the Department can quickly access images and evidence gathered from traffic stops and other calls for service. The Department is also "expanding its police force" by installing public safety cameras in public spaces, particularly during special events or in areas that are experiencing increases in crime. To maximize the value of these systems, and to fully utilize the aerial images available from APD's helicopter, the City needs to invest in advanced wireless technology to provide live streaming video of the captured images. Access to live streaming video will allow the Department to observe activity in real-time during critical situations.